

## Chapter Three PLAN CONTEXT

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### 3.1. Lincoln Park History

*The following history of Lincoln Park is summarized from the “Sherwood Files” compiled by longtime Parks Department employee, Don Sherwood, who died in 1981. These files are now located in the City Archives. Portions pertinent to vegetation character and landscape development are highlighted.*

What today is known as **Lincoln Park** was acquired by the City of Seattle in 1922. It was originally called **Williams Point Park** in 1909 and later **Fauntleroy Park**, having been named after Ellinor Fauntleroy. She was the betrothed of Lt. George Davidson, who bestowed the name after he took soundings off the beach in 1857. Davidson also named Olympic Mountain peaks to honor her and her family: (Mt. Ellinor, and Mts. Constance & Rose and the Brothers, Arthur & Edward.)

**In 1904, realtor John F. Adams recognized the beauty of the saltwater location and developed a summer resort at the Fauntleroy beach**, and was soon joined by Laurence Colman who built the first year-round residence in 1907. They were followed quickly by others, and a small community grew up. An electric trolley line from Seattle provided access, across the Duwamish tidelands to the West Seattle Ferry landing. At this time the main hazards of rail travel were bear and deer in the right-of-way! **Conifers were logged from this area to supply masts for the growing shipbuilding industry.**

Seattle City Council approved the acquisition of Fauntleroy Park on the recommendation of the Olmsted Brothers who designed major elements of Seattle’s Park system beginning in 1903, but unfortunately, they were never commissioned to develop a plan for this 130 acre wooded area. A 1908 Olmsted *Report on Annexed Territory and General Development* shows the Sound Bluffs Parkway running along the top of the bluff north to Schmitz Park. This was to “preserve without interfering any more than necessary with valuable residential properties along the shore road.” **This proposal never was implemented, keeping cars out of Lincoln Park proper and helping secure a more natural character for the park.**

**It seems apparent that major elements of the work developing Lincoln Park over the years occurred without a particular design vision**, but nevertheless resulting in the wonderful West Seattle resource we know today.

A shelter house was completed in the park in **1925** ( north comfort station) inaugurating a tradition of band concerts, sponsored by the “All West Seattle, Picnic Committee” held yearly during the last week in July. This prompted the first parking lot to be built along Fauntleroy Ave. in **1928**, and in **1929 a tide-fed salt water pool was dug on the beach at Williams Point, a precursor to the Coleman Pool now in existence. Also, \$1000 water system was requested for new plantings.**

**There were 23 summer cottages along the beach until 1931, when the first work began on clearing and grubbing brush. Playground construction followed in 1930 and a shop area was built at the Park Caretaker’s Residence that lasted until 1970. In 1931 a project for unemployed workers began the seawall construction. 1932 was also the year that a Deodar Cedar was planted to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of George Washington’s birth**, supposedly with a bronze marker. (They were big on presidents...the name Lincoln Park was chosen to “encourage

**patriotism in the children of Seattle.”) The WPA, in 1934, continued to clear weeds, planting, building trails, fireplaces and horseshoe courts.**

In 1941 a “Prominent Neighbor” donated \$152,539.00 in the memory of pioneer Laurence Colman, (Colman, 1860-1935, was the son of James M. Colman of Colman Park fame and Colman Ferry Terminal in Pioneer Square.) to build a concrete swimming pool. This ended neighbors’ concern over the original mud swimming hole that required periodic trips by the SFD to hose out debris. The Colmans also assisted in the building of the WPA tennis courts.

Also in 1941, Acting Mayor of Seattle, James Scavotto, issued a directive to the Parks Board of Commissioners to “discontinue the practice of denying Colman Pool access to racial minorities.” A follow-up letter from the Washington Commonwealth Federation states they were shocked to learn of the “denial of public bathing facilities to American Children of the Japanese and Negro races.” And that, “In these critical times, with the very idea of freedom, equality and brotherhood threatened by the military forces of German Fascism, public authorities should be exceptionally vigilant in combating the dissention and disunity which Hitler has proved can arise so harmfully from irrational racial prejudices.”

**In 1962, an impassioned petition was circulated by neighbors that was “in strict opposition to the proposed campsite in Lincoln Park for transient tourists during the 1962 World’s Fair, or at any other time.”**

Lights were installed along the shore Promenade to the pool in 1963, and, says Sherwood, “A hobbit’s version of **an underground Comfort Station was built in 1971.**” **Apparently it was designed to have a vegetated roof -hence the cylindrical skylights-**, and its organic shape is somewhat reminiscent of a space ship.

**Lincoln Park Seawall Renovation and Beach Restoration report was completed in 1985, to study erosion and structural deterioration of the seawall, and the Lincoln Park Shoreline Study was completed in 1988, addressing some of the issues of picnic shelters and circulation, as well as hillside erosion. Apparently most of the plantings for the slide area south of Williams Point failed due to lack of irrigation. Beach grass and a wetland planting north of Colman Pool exist from this time.**

### 3.2 Previous Plans and Policies

This VMP acknowledges and incorporates information from the following Plans and Policies, previously adopted by the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation:

#### Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation Tree Policy (2001)

The Tree Policy was officially adopted in June 2001. As stated, the purpose of the Tree Policy is: “To maintain, preserve, and enhance the urban forest within parks. To increase overall tree canopy, tree health, and tree longevity within parks. To ensure that parks trees are managed in such a manner that is consistent with other departmental and municipal policies.” The Tree Policy includes guidance for what is to be included within a Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) for a City Park:

- Site inventory and assessment including a site map illustrating topography and vegetation.
- Trees that are proposed for removal and/or pruning must be designated.
- Planting design showing species, size, location and any needed erosion control/slope stabilization methods.
- Public involvement plan, if applicable in compliance with Parks Department Public Involvement Procedures (PIP).
- Maintenance plan including tasks, and frequencies.

Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation Urban Wildlife and Habitat Management Plan (2000 Update)

- Continue and increase wildlife habitat protection and enhancement efforts.
- Protect and enhance wildlife populations.
- Provide environmental education, using wildlife resources.
- Develop and maintain a wildlife resource inventory.
- Promote volunteer involvement in wildlife and habitat protection and enhancement.
- Promote internal education and consistency in Department actions.
- Promote interdepartmental and interagency cooperation to protect wildlife.

Lincoln Park Shoreline Planning Study (1988)

Work recommended included picnic shelter and circulation improvements along the promenade, improved lighting and of interest for vegetation management, erosion control methods. A significant portion of this work was completed.

Lincoln Park Seawall Renovation and Beach Restoration Report (1985)

This report addressed beach erosion and seawall deterioration.

### 3.3 Summary of Citizen Concerns

Public meetings held on April 24, 2001 and May 22, 2002 generated citizen comments and questions relevant to vegetation management at Lincoln Park. Appendix B (Chapter 10) records the concerns raised at these respective meetings, in addition to comment received by other means (written, phone, email). Citizens identified the following summary concerns, which the VMP seeks to address:

- Viability of madronas and conifer tree species showing signs of stress
- Stability of bluff and potential for mitigation through plantings and drainage
- Removal of invasive plant species and control of Park edge plantings
- Increasing forested patches within lawn areas
- Trails: reducing social trails, improving signage, future overhaul for better continuity
- Protecting unique, non-native tree stands
- Developing beach edge and wetland plant communities in shoreline area.
- Enhancing upper park riparian corridor (current drainage way)
- Maintaining defined view corridors from bluff trail
- Enhancing park security
- Establishing a Friends of Lincoln Park group for ongoing stewardship

### 3.4 Vegetation-related Uses

As the map, Human Use at Lincoln Park found in Appendix F (Chapter 10) indicates, there are many recreational opportunities that entice a constant stream of visitors to Lincoln Park. Human activity in the park generates both direct and indirect pressures on the landscape. Colman Pool is Seattle's only saltwater pool, and one of only three outdoor public pools in the city. Colman Pool hosts regional swim meets as well as regular seasonal users. Beach and lawn areas adjacent to the pool consequently are subject to heavy use throughout warm months of the year.

Picnicking has been extremely popular at Lincoln Park since the early 1900's, and continues to be so today. Supporting facilities include numerous shelters and comfort stations, as well as horseshoe pits, an exercise course (now in disrepair), a concession stand and tennis courts. A wading pool located in

the northeast corner of the park lies adjacent to a frequently-used picnic area, a playground, and heavily scheduled ballfields. A newer playground at the south end of the park draws many families with children. Activity magnets like these contribute to vegetation trampling and breakage, weed dispersal, tree root compaction and other adverse effects on vegetation. Concentrated use also dictates a higher level of management than informal, lower use portions of the landscape require.

Summer day camps utilize formal facilities as well as the overall park landscape. Nearly constant informal recreational uses at Lincoln Park include bike racers, cross country runners, dog-walkers, hikers, bluff sunset viewers and beachcombers along the Promenade. An area known as the “Wedding Meadow” is the site for numerous nuptials every year. Park vegetation provides the setting this broad array of human users, and in turn the landscape is significantly affected by visitors. The distribution and degree of impacts in part direct vegetation management strategies for the park.